

Washington, D.C. - As the nation loses over 500,000 jobs every month, Congresswoman Melissa Bean (IL-08) joined a majority in the House of Representatives today in support of the economic stimulus package, H.R. 1, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. The bill, which was approved by a vote of 246-183, includes several measures pushed by Bean that target middle-class families, small businesses, and long-term infrastructure improvements.

“This bill puts the money where it matters, combining investment in infrastructure, education, health IT and green energy with relief for struggling small businesses and tax cuts for middle-class families to create jobs and get our economy moving,” said Congresswoman Melissa Bean, New Dem Vice-Chair. “The plan is bold, broad-based and balanced.”

Bean worked with her colleagues, Congressional leadership, and the Obama Administration towards inclusion of the following legislative initiatives.

Job retention: To help businesses maintain cash flow and keep their employees on payroll, Bean and her New Dem colleagues pushed for a change to tax law that would allow businesses to retroactively spread out this year’s losses. Under present law, businesses with a net-operating loss this year may amend their tax filings to carry that loss back two years to offset taxable income in such years, so they can “smooth out” swings in business income. As Bean previously proposed in her 2008 GROW Act, H.R. 5107, and now in H.R. 1, an expansion of the carry back to five years would allow previously profitable businesses that are now suffering to maintain their staffing levels and invest more.

Business stimulus: H.R. 1 also includes a continuation of Bean’s 2008 GROW Act provision that temporarily doubles the Section 179 small business expense tax deduction, encouraging businesses to invest in equipment that can grow their business.

Stability in health coverage: With unemployment climbing at a dramatic pace, America faces a surge in the ranks of families without health insurance. Bean introduced the Health Insurance Stability Act, H.R. 7010 as part of the Democratic Middle Class Working Group last year to make bridge insurance more accessible to those who have lost their jobs and cannot afford to keep their COBRA coverage. COBRA monthly premiums average \$700 per family, and H.R. 1 will provide a 65 percent subsidy to offset these costs.

Energy infrastructure: As advocated by Bean and her colleagues on the New Democrat Coalition’s Energy Task Force, H.R. 1 will invest in a modernized, “smart” power grid that would provide next-generation green jobs and is a necessary first step towards launching a larger green economy. Modernization of our power infrastructure will set the stage for stimulating private investment in wind, solar, geothermal and other renewable energy sources.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act appropriates \$463 billion for transportation and infrastructure construction, investment in green energy and energy efficiency, health care modernization, education assistance, and assistance to states and municipalities, as well as \$326 billion in tax relief for businesses and families.

This jobs and economic recovery plan will directly impact the 8th District, Illinois and the nation by:

- Creating or saving 3.5 million jobs nationwide over the next two years.
- Providing a tax cut of up to \$400 for individuals, \$800 for families, for 4.9 million Illinois tax filers. It will start paying out immediately into workers' paychecks.
- Creating construction and engineering jobs and investing in our nation's future with an extra \$935.6 million in Illinois for modernization of roads and bridges and investment in high-speed rail.
- Creating more than 1 million next-generation green energy jobs nationwide through development of new innovative energy sources.
- Lowering health care costs and improving care by computerizing medical records, which will create hundreds of thousands of jobs, and helping those who cannot afford health care in these tough times.
- Modernizing schools and making college more affordable with improved Pell Grants for the 274,019 Pell Grant recipients here in Illinois and a higher education tax credit for 156,000 students in our state.
- Saving the jobs of teachers, police officers, health care workers, and protecting the vital services they provide through assistance to state governments.

The bill includes new measures of accountability and transparency, including a ban on earmarks in the legislation; a dedicated website, www.recovery.gov, that will track every dollar of spending; increased funding for the Government Accountability Office; an independent oversight board; and quarterly reports to Congress.

"In the last year, unemployment in Illinois has climbed from 5.3 percent to 7.6 percent," Bean said. "This bold action is necessary to preserve and create jobs and spending."